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ABSTRACT

Texas' overall goal must be to reduce the percentage of its population without basic literacy and numeracy skills to no more than the percentage of jobs available to these underprepared workers. With only 14 percent of tomorrow's jobs projected to require less than a high school education, nearly one Texas worker in five will be unemployable. The Texas Literacy Council must continue its work to make literacy services available to all Texans. Its primary goal is enhancing literacy services and establishing local councils where no services exist or where coordination of services is needed. The council has identified three major goals to add to its essential mission: (1) establish and support a comprehensive network of family literacy programs throughout the state; (2) support and enhance workplace literacy initiatives; and (3) coordinate with the criminal justice system to attack the link between illiteracy and crime. The council will work to build accurate and fair tools to measure effectiveness and build accountability, pegged to nationally acceptable standards. It recommends continuation of the Interagency Work Group and a public awareness campaign. (YLB)

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DEVELOPING HUMAN CAPITAL

A Five-Year Plan for Enhancing Literacy in Texas

Presented to
The Governor of Texas
The Lieutenant Governor of Texas
The Speaker of the House
The Members of the 72nd Legislature

Report of
The Texas Literacy Council

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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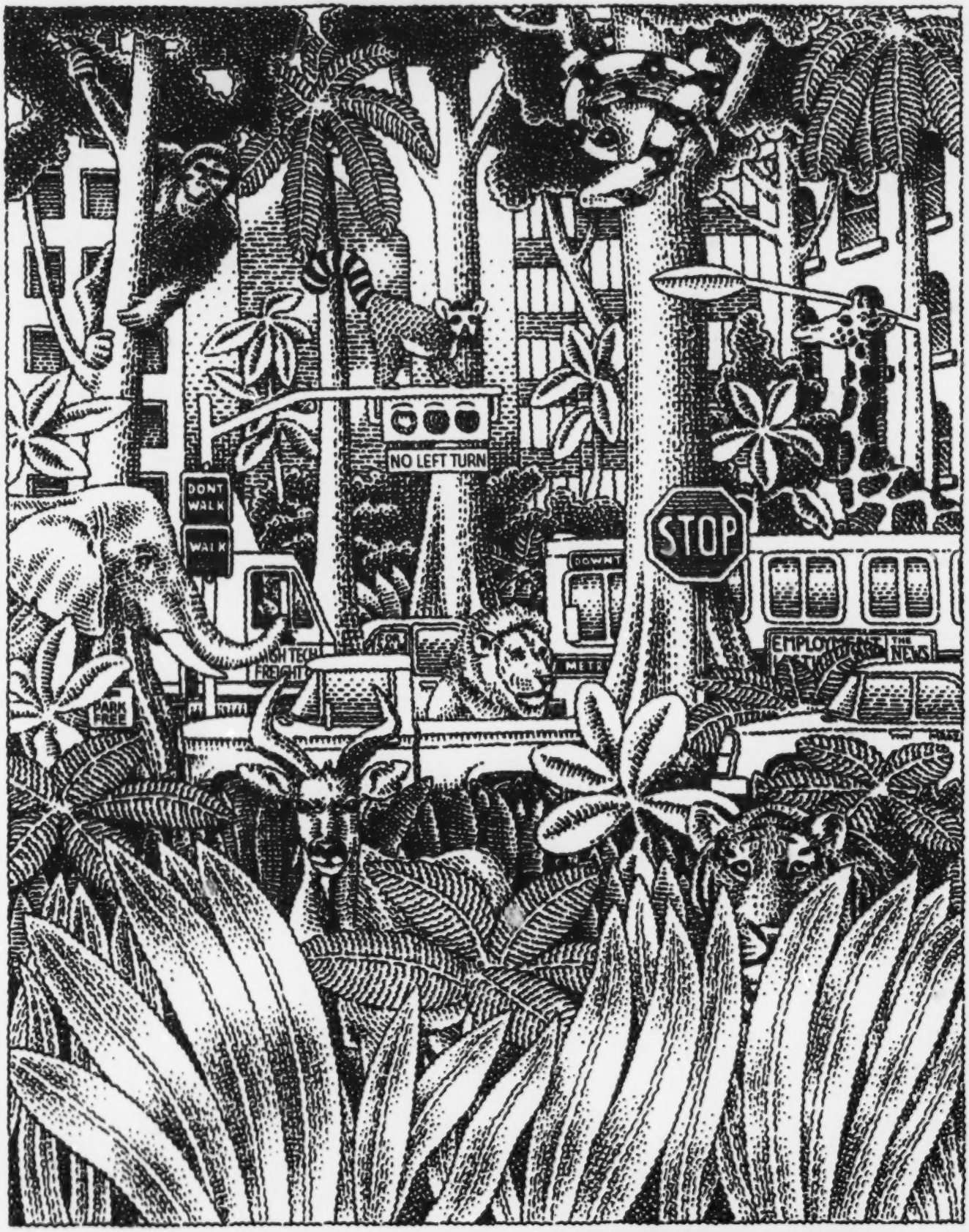
It's a jungle out there if you can't read.



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The definition of literacy is endlessly debated, but most agree it goes beyond reading and is contextual and ever-changing as our society changes.

> *Literacy is the ability to understand, produce and manipulate language.*
>
> *Literacy is the ability to read and write and to reason effectively about what one reads or writes.*
>
> *National Adult Literacy Survey*
>
> *Literacy is the ability to use printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential.*
>
> *National Assessment of Educational Progress*
>
> *Literacy is like the horizon: the closer you get to it, the farther away it appears.*
>
> *H. Dunnel Chapman, Texas Library Council*

The definition of basic skills is more cut and dried.

> *Basic skills—a basic competence in reading, writing and math, a basic understanding of science, and a basic literacy about modern technology—the tools of thought, the tools of communicating, the tools of problem solving, the tools of work and life.*
>
> *Direct Strategies to Reform Education*
> *by Charles H. Benson, National Education Issues*

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Executive Summary

exas' overall goal must be to reduce the percentage of its population without basic skills in reading and mathematics to no more than the percent of jobs available to these under-prepared workers.

The U.S. Department of Labor projects only 14% of future jobs will require less than a high school education. We can take a group of 100 students entering kindergarten today and track them using current dropout and performance statistics. If current trends continue, of 100 Texas children starting kindergarten, 18 will drop out before the eighth grade. Of the 82 who go on to high school, 27 will drop out before graduation. Of the 55 students who graduate, 7 of them will not be able to read and write. So 52 of the original 100 students will leave school with less than the equivalent of a high school education. Tracking the figures this way and then taking into account those students who go on to achieve a high school education through GED or other non-traditional means, it is easy to accept the much-quoted figure that 33% of Texans are functionally illiterate. **And with only 14% of tomorrow's jobs projected to require less than a high school education, nearly one Texas worker in five will be unemployable.**

"It is way too early to condemn the U.S. to doom. We are dealing from strength, not weakness ... We have the capacity to change, but it takes a conscious decision, and change is painful."

Former Labor Secretary William Brock

In the long run, basic education reform and a reduction in the dropout rate are crucial to developing an internationally competitive labor force. In the short run, it is imperative that the Texas Literacy Council continue its work to make literacy services available to all Texans. The Council will vigorously strive toward its primary goal of enhancing literacy services and establishing local councils where no services exist or where coordination of services is needed. Specific populations and regions need greater access to literacy services.

Additionally, the Council has identified three major goals to add to its essential mission:

- **Goal 1: Establish and support a comprehensive network of family literacy programs throughout the state;**
- **Goal 2: Support and enhance workplace literacy initiatives; and**
- **Goal 3: Coordinate with the criminal justice system to attack the link between illiteracy and crime.**

We must focus on the critical 20% needing training to enter or remain in the workforce, because not to is to doom them to a lifetime of limited job opportunities and limited income at best, and to support them in welfare and prison systems at worse, both at a terrible price to Texas taxpayers.

The foundation of all of the Texas Literacy Council's goals is the importance of life-long learning; the focus is prevention and remediation of illiteracy. The Council's five-year strategic plan, starting on page eight, will guide Texas in laying the foundation for life-long learning by promoting school readiness in pre-schoolers and increasing literacy services for adults in need.

That Texas cannot adequately serve its population in need of literacy services with restrictive federal funds is clearly shown in this report. The Texas Literacy Council respectively asks the Legislature for general revenue appropriations, as outlined on page 16.

The Problem

The illiteracy problem in the United States and in Texas is not new. The statistics are not new.

- The United States ranks 48th in adult literacy among the 149 countries represented at the United Nations.
- Texas ranks 47th among the states in adult literacy, putting us fourth from the bottom of a heap that is already low in international terms.
- Twenty percent of Texas workers cannot read, write or do simple math. This compares to five percent of adults in Japan.
- The most recent cost estimate of illiteracy to Texas is $17.12 billion annually in lost income, missed tax revenue, unemployment insurance, welfare dependency, adult training and education costs, and the price of crime and incarceration. The estimate for the United States is $225 billion per year.
- The illiteracy rate among prison inmates is appalling, reflecting a school dropout rate of upwards of 75%. It costs Texas $35,000 per year to maintain each inmate.
- Of those receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) payments, 51% of the adults have not completed high school.

A 23-year-old insurance company employee paid a policy-holder $2,200 on a $100 claim instead of the $22 authorized. She didn't understand decimals.

A 19-year-old feed-lot laborer accidentally killed a herd of cattle. "I wasn't real sure what the package label said," he says. "Well, it was poison, not food."

Business Council for Effective Literacy, *Texas Business Today*

In fact, the statistics are becoming quite known. They are in newspaper and magazine articles and on television public service announcements. Yet these frightening statistics are almost unbelievable.

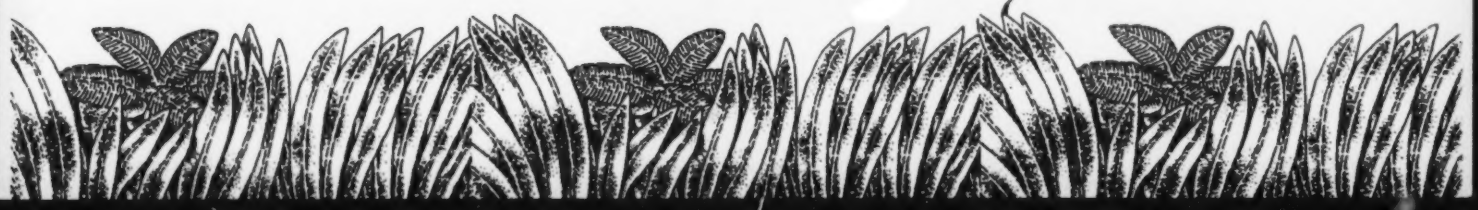
> "Are we really so cynical or are we afraid to face the problem? ... The figures are widely reported, but too rarely followed up by action. Taxpayers and legislators are not yet determined to insure that every child has the opportunity to grow up healthy and whole, to be secure, and to become literate and economically productive."
>
> *--T. Berry Brazelton, "Why Is America Failing Its Children?"*

Texans may not yet be *determined* to wipe out illiteracy, but we have certainly made a start. The Strategic Economic Policy Commission lists as one of its major goals *the improvement and expansion of educational services that ensure fundamental basic skills -- including literacy -- for all Texans*. The Texas Department of Commerce has incorporated this goal into its strategic plan and lists the following as a major objective:

> Promote the development of a work force with sound fundamental skills and literacy levels which strengthen the competitiveness of Texas businesses.

That literacy is part of Texas' economic policy, that it is an intricate part of economic development, is in response to three issues causing a transition in the state's economy:

- the global economy,
- workforce changes, and
- workplace changes.



These changes are not the cause of illiteracy, but they magnify and make more urgent the need for literacy training.

The fact that a true global economy is upon us can be illustrated in a shipping label for integrated circuits produced by a U.S. firm:

> "Made in one or more of the following countries: Korea, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, Mauritius, Thailand, Indonesia, Mexico, Philippines. The exact country of origin is unknown."

To remain an economic contender, we must prepare our youth to adequately compete globally. By any measure used, Texas student achievement rates are lower than those of other states and lower still than those of other countries.

Whether the product is a potato chip, a micro chip, or a cow chip, Texas employers are concerned about the workplace skills of both veteran and new employees.

Texas' changing demographics make this problem of under-prepared youth even more profound. The fastest growing segments of the population are those who have traditionally been the most educationally disadvantaged. The Intercultural Developmental Research Association puts the dropout rate in Texas at 45% for Hispanics, 34% for blacks, and 27% for whites. The current projected dropout rate for Hispanic seventh-graders in the Houston Independent School District is 54%. Even if we reduce these appalling rates, with the current product coming out of the Texas educational system our workforce cannot compete in today's workplace.

Today's workplace is an ever-changing place:

> "When I first started, it didn't take much to do this," says a potato inspector at a Frito-Lay plant. "Now you've got to know something."
>
> *The Victoria Advocate, Victoria, Texas*

Success Stories

El Paso Community College, one of the partners to a Texas Literacy Council grant, provides workplace literacy instruction in partnership with the Levi Strauss Company. They have learned first-hand the importance of job-specific instruction and are incorporating their experience into a model workplace literacy program.

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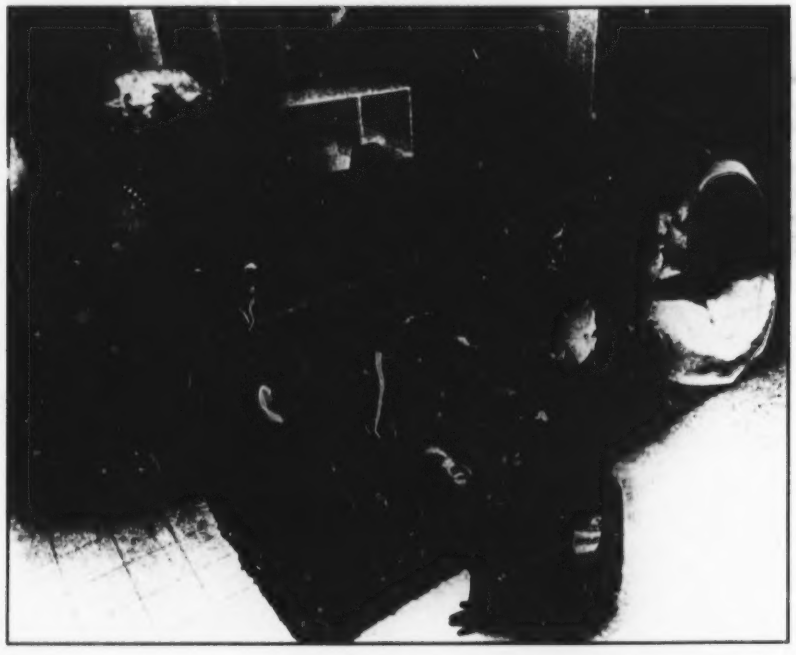
Whether the product is a potato chip, a micro chip, or a cow chip, Texas employers are concerned about the workplace skills of both veteran and new employees. From manufacturing to agriculture, employees who can read and write are finding themselves technologically illiterate in today's workplace. And employees who can't read and write are finding themselves unemployable.

Current statistics show that the impact of underprepared youth has already hit Texas businesses.

- Of 4,500 personnel offices surveyed in Texas, 67 % indicate that they are having difficulty in locating technical and other skilled workers.
- A Texas Research League survey found 43 percent of Texas employers report difficulty in hiring entry-level employees who possess basic skills in reading, writing and math.
- The primary concern of more than 80% of employers was finding workers with a strong work ethic and appropriate social behavior.

The problem is known. Now is the time to fix it. The future is here. The kindergartners of 1990 are the high school graduates of 2003. We must intervene now if Texas is to be prepared for the 21st Century.

Intervention at one point only -- education reform, dropout reduction -- will not solve the problems of illiterate Texans and an underprepared workforce. The problems are interrelated and solutions will be also. **Texas needs a crystallizing vision to move forward. The Texas Literacy Council's goal to ensure life-long educational opportunities for all Texans is the answer.**



Success Stories

The Avance Parent-Child Education Program is nationally recognized as one of the most promising efforts in the move to help adults help their children and themselves to literacy. This San Antonio program is one of the model programs chosen by the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy for inclusion in First Teachers.

The Texas Literacy Council

Background

o the problem and the statistics are not new. What is new is the Texas Literacy Council, founded by the Legislature in 1987 in response to a report by the Texas Task Force on Literacy that pointed out the direct link between basic literacy skills and economic development. The Texas Literacy Council was established with the following goals as its primary focus:

- to be an advocate for literacy work in the state,
- to coordinate and strengthen literacy services, and
- to help make literacy instruction available to adults and out of school youth in every Texas community.

Texas needs a crystallizing vision to move forward. The Texas Literacy Council's goal to ensure lifelong educational opportunities for all Texans is the answer.

House Bill 1888, passed in May 1989, further specified and broadened the Texas Literacy Council's challenge. An Interagency Work Group, with representatives of other state agencies involved in literacy services, was established to advise the Texas Literacy Council. HB 1888 included the following tasks for the Council:

- provide state-level assistance to local literacy groups;
- serve a state coordinating role in planning and implementing literacy policy in Texas; and
- develop a five-year strategic plan for literacy.

HB 1888 also established the Texas Literacy Council as an advisory body in the Texas Department of Commerce. Appropriations of $1 million annually in JTPA funds were allocated to the Texas Literacy Council for program funding. Federal law requires 80% of the appropriation to be used to fund programs that provide services for educationally and economically disadvantaged citizens. The remaining 20% of the JTPA resources are to be used to facilitate coordination of education and training services to build the capacity of literacy services. Additionally, $250,000 annually was appropriated for administrative costs.

Accomplishments

In its first few years, the Texas Literacy Council has many accomplishments.

- Texas A&M's Texas Center for Adult Literacy and Learning (TCALL), under contract with the Texas Literacy Council, has developed a report on the state of adult literacy in Texas. TCALL's research clearly shows a large gap between the need for services and services available. No local literacy services are available in 100 Texas counties. In large metropolitan counties, there are an estimated 11,000 potential students per available program.

- The Council established a toll free hotline (1-800-441-READ) to refer students and volunteers to available services within the state from a database developed by the Council. TCALL operates the hotline.

- The Council has increased the communication and coordination among the many state agencies providing literacy services through its Interagency Work Group.

- The Council has provided technical assistance such as conferences and training seminars for literacy professionals and volunteers around the state to develop a team approach and foster awareness and sensitivity to the needs and problems of different service delivery groups in the same area.

- The Council has recently updated its first *Guide to Literacy Funding Sources*. The guide includes local, state and federal funding sources as well as national and Texas foundations that support literacy efforts.

- The Council's *Directory of Literacy Providers* lists current in-state programs. The first edition of this directory listed less than 300 entities, while the second edition lists nearly 600 literacy providers. The directory established a database for referral and networking among providers.

- The Council is continuing research on and development of a literacy trust fund to provide on-going additional support to non-profit literacy providers.

Success Stories

The Cameron County Private Industry Council, in partnership with the Brownsville Adult Literacy Council and Texas Southmost College, is a Texas Literacy Council grant recipient. Students like 55-year-old Anselma Balderas, pictured here with tutor Many Jane Martinez, joined the program to become employable. "I love to learn and want to gain a better understanding of English, to get a job," said Balderas, adding that the knowledge she gained in the course is starting to open doors for her.

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- The Council established two grants programs, one creating partnerships among literacy service providers and another to build the capacity of local literacy efforts. These highly successful programs are described below.

Partnerships Grants Program

The Texas Literacy Council's Partnerships Grants Program asked for originality, innovation and coordination from a consortium of entities that had not previously worked together. The program asked volunteers to work side-by-side with government agencies and educators under the constraints of federal funds. The programs served 93% of the participants planned for and 72% of the participants achieved the program objectives. The 11 partnerships funded in February 1990 with $800,000 in federal literacy grants provided basic skills training to 507 participants, conducted 72 training workshops, trained 919 volunteer tutors, certified 22 tutor trainers, funded or enhanced 22 literacy councils and established four new literacy councils by June 1990. These figures are in addition to the successes of the local literacy support grants, described below.

The first round of partnerships grants awarded by the Texas Literacy Council provided basic skills training to 760 participants, conducted 97 tutor training workshops, trained 1,172 volunteer tutors, certified 34 tutor trainers, funded or enhanced 49 literacy councils, and established 9 new literacy councils, in just five months. This wave of grants included start-up costs, and therefore the results from the second grants will be even greater.

In July of 1990, 11 more grants totalling another $800,000 were awarded. The funds were for JTPA-eligible Texans functioning at or below the sixth grade reading level and were administered by private industry councils, councils of government, and other JTPA administrative entities. These entities partnered efforts with local literacy councils, as well as public libraries, higher education institutions, community based organizations, adult basic education programs, and other literacy providers.

The need for and interest in these grants was overwhelming. Even with the tight restrictions inherent in JTPA funds, the number of applicants far exceeded the funds available. The number of literacy entities that didn't even apply due to the restrictive funding requirements is anyone's guess.

Local Literacy Support

During the first six months of 1990, the Texas Literacy Council's capacity building grants for local literacy efforts partnered with other literacy providers to accomplish the following: 25 tutor training workshops, 253 tutors trained and then matched with at least one student, 12 trainers certified, 27 literacy councils enhanced and five new literacy councils established.

Five-Year Strategic Plan

ith its many accomplishments, it might seem as though the Texas Literacy Council could simply continue along its current path. The experience and knowledge gained during the Council's first years lead to a different conclusion.

TCALL's research substantiates the devastating need for adult literacy services throughout the state, and the Council is diligently working on this problem. Because illiteracy is inextricably related to a host of other problems, the Council must now zero in on the following areas:

- family literacy;
- workplace literacy; and
- the link between illiteracy and crime.

In order to assure action, the Texas Literacy Council will establish oversight committees within the Council in each of these areas.

General revenue appropriations are requested. Past experience shows they are required for the Texas Literacy Council to achieve its goals:

- JTPA funds are so restrictive as to leave a large portion of illiterate Texans ineligible for participation in JTPA-funded programs. One program that was funded with the intention of serving 30 people had 94 applicants but only 18 were eligible under the JTPA restrictions.
- JTPA funds for the category into which literacy programs fall have been cut by 10% for the 1990-1991 program year.
- The Council needs flexible funding dollars to encourage successful, innovative programs not eligible for JTPA funds. Family literacy programs fall into this category.
- One of the main missions established for the Council by the Legislature is the creation of local literacy councils, but JTPA funds cannot be used for this purpose.

Success Stories

The Travis County Adult Literacy Council, through the Texas Literacy Council's grant to the Austin/Travis County Private Industry Council, is providing opportunities for Texans like Estela Navarrete and her son, Marcos. Estela completed three months work in one month and has written a story to read to her son. She is building on her third-grade education to obtain a better job for herself, and to help educate and read to her son.

Goal 1 Establish and support a comprehensive network of family literacy programs throughout the state.

> "Because of this intergenerational effect of the parents' education on the child's, it is unlikely that we will be able to make a major difference for the child unless we place equal priority on education and academic remediation for the parent."
>
> *Toward a More Perfect Union*
> *Ford Foundation*

Numerous research studies show that breaking the intergenerational cycle of illiteracy is one of the most effective ways of reaching children of illiterate parents. Abundant examples have proven that early childhood intervention with a family approach -- teaching the child and the parent at the same time -- helps pave the way for school success. It has been proven that a child's reading proficiency is directly related to his or her parent's educational level, as well as to the presence of reading material in the home.

Early intervention, in addition to being the most effective way to prepare a child for life-long learning, is very cost efficient. One such program yielded roughly six dollars in benefits to society for each dollar invested. 1990 estimates from the report *Education That Works* show that preschool education returns $4.75 for every dollar because of lower costs of special education, public assistance and crime.

Successful family literacy programs can be found throughout Texas, but many more programs are needed. The Council could go a long way toward its goal of providing literacy services in all Texas communities if it had general revenue funds to encourage replication of current successful programs. Successful programs around the country started with someone's personal vision and a funding source. The Texas Literacy Council has the expertise to recognize good ideas, concepts and programs. It should have the ability to support and replicate these efforts.

"Parents seeking instruction know well the costs of becoming literate. They face the questions of friends and family, and some meet real resistance at home as they try to learn. This shakes their confidence, and they may want to stop. But what seems too difficult to do for themselves, they may do for their child. A child's laughter and smiling face buoys parents as they move toward improved literacy. Could there be a more powerful motivator?"

Ruth S. Nickse, Ph.D.
Family Literacy in Action: A Survey of Successful Programs

The Texas Literacy Council proposes the following strategies to meet its goals in the area of family literacy.

- **Establish family literacy as a major goal of local literacy councils across Texas, and encourage coalitions among early childhood and adult literacy programs to achieve efficient, effective family-centered approaches.**

The Council will be a networking entity to encourage innovation and export successful programs.

- **Build coalitions among literacy providers.**

One of the Texas Literacy Council's mandates is to achieve more effective coordination of existing resources. The Council will work to build coalitions between providers of successful early childhood programs and successful adult basic education programs to create family programs. Neither population can be served separately as effectively as you can serve them together.

Another area specifically ripe for coordinated efforts is the public education development fund created by Senate Bill 1, the public education reform act passed in the 6th Called Session of the 71st Legislature. The fund includes $5 million in appropriations to encourage local school districts to take an innovative approach to teaching and solving educational problems, including parental literacy, early childhood education, and parental involvement. Since family literacy programs focus on all of these areas AT THE SAME TIME, it is incumbent upon the Texas Literacy Council to help develop partnerships to use the appropriated funds most effectively.

- **Build awareness of established resources.**

The Texas Literacy Council must work to broaden the impact, accelerate the pace and increase the effectiveness of programs currently serving family literacy needs. One of the most effective ways of accomplishing this is the creation of literacy councils in counties where a council does not exist. A local literacy council fosters coordination among those providing literacy services in the area, thus increase effectiveness and efficiency. Currently the Texas Literacy Council cannot use JTPA funds to directly establish local literacy councils.

Success Stories

Alejos "Alex" Diaz, chosen as the outstanding student of the Kingsville Literacy Program, enrolled at Texas A&I University's JTPA Literacy Program on his lunch hour. Although he went through eight years of public school in Houston, Alex could not read or write beyond signing his name and address. At the end of the two month program, co-funded by a Texas Literacy Council grant to the Rural Coastal Bend Private Industry Council and four area literacy councils, Alex had gained a full grade level in reading and almost four grade levels in math. Such amazing progress was due to his total focus on his goal to get his GED and graduate from college with a wildlife protection degree. His daughter proudly displays his outstanding student award.

Goal 2 Support and enhance workplace literacy initiatives.

The Texas Literacy Council was initially conceived to facilitate community effort and private sector involvement in the struggle to retrain illiterates for a more competitive job market. Its overriding public policy objective to retool the Texas workforce will in large part be accomplished in the workplace since two-thirds of the labor pool for the year 2000 is already in the workforce. Texas businesses are taking on this endeavor, but much more needs to be done.

Our major competitor nations support company-based training through general revenue or payroll-tax-based financing schemes. In order for the United States to remain internationally competitive, one report, *America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages*, suggests a more comprehensive system where skills upgrading for the majority of workers becomes a central aim of public policy.

With the number of job changes per lifetime in the future projected by the *National Goals for Education* to be as high as 10 or 11, workers must be given continuing training and education by the firms they work for or 15 to 30 percent of workers will fall out of the skilled labor force every year, according to a July 1990 issue of *TIME*.

While companies are finding that the most successful workplace literacy programs relate basic skills to job training in such areas as computer literacy, co-worker communication, typing and deciphering complex instructions, the number of companies offering such developmental basic skills training is declining both nationally and in Texas. This is alarming given the increased need for employees to have access to such training. Instead, companies expect to increase their **remedial** basic skills courses significantly.

Illiteracy lies behind many of the problems facing Texas business today, including spiraling workers compensation and health care costs. Raising the state literacy rate is an integral part of Texas's ability to attract new companies to the state and to diversify our economy.

"Companies are finding that traditional workplace literacy programs focusing on basic reading, writing and math skills are falling short. The 'back-to-basics' programs are having to be replaced with a 'forward-to-the-future' curriculum that emphasizes telecommunications technologies, advanced science knowledge and technical skills for problem-solving."

Marvin Cetron and
Margaret Evans Gayle
Educational Renaissance

The Texas Literacy Council proposes the following strategies to meet its goals in the area of workplace literacy initiatives.

- **Encourage identification and promote awareness of what basic skills will be needed in tomorrow's workforce. It would be helpful for businesses to know exactly what their training goals should be to meet the workforce requirements of the 21st century.**

- **Assess and build awareness of current successful workplace literacy initiatives.**

The business community doesn't need to be told how to run programs, but it would be helpful to have a handbook that shows the types of programs that have proven successful and includes program guidelines for success and information on where to go for help.

- **Build coalitions and promote dialogue and funding opportunities.**

The Texas Literacy Council has identified many effective partnerships in the state's higher education institutions and local literacy councils. It will continue to work to coordinate the current largely uncoordinated services in this area and to promote a corporate environment that is receptive to experimentation and change in terms of workforce literacy training.

"I'd been wanting to go back to school, but there was no one to take care of my son," says JOBS participant Alice Rodriguez. "The day care we get through JOBS helps a lot."

Photo Credit: Texas Department of Human Services

Success Stories

The Texas Department of Human Services' Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) Program is a federally mandated program designed to link the efforts of the education, employment and training agencies with state and local programs. Its thrust is that it **requires** *many Aid to Families with Dependent Children recipients to participate in educational programs if they do not have a high school diploma or GED. For the first time, a major welfare program has a specific tie-in to literacy and education expectations. The program provides child care, transportation and other service resources. The program goal is to help AFDC recipients become self-sufficient -- off of welfare -- by preparing them for jobs that exist in the community.*

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Goal 3 Coordinate with the criminal justice system to attack the link between illiteracy and crime.

In recognition of the link between illiteracy and crime, the Legislature recently passed HB 2634, which states that a prisoner with less than a sixth grade educational skill level will have as a condition of his or her parole the attainment of that level. The Board of Pardons and Paroles estimates 30,000 parolees and 20,000 probationers per year leave the system with skills below the sixth grade level. As is obvious from TCALL's adult literacy research, current local literacy services do not exist to serve this population. The Texas Literacy Council must focus on increasing literacy training in prisons and county and city jails, as well as on expanding the capacity to serve parolees and probationers. It is too expensive in human and economic terms not to do so.

The Texas Literacy Council proposes the following strategies to meet its goals in the area of inmate, parolee and probationer literacy.

- **Assess and build awareness of current successful parolee literacy programs.**
- **Work with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice to develop the capacity to meet the requirements of HB 2634.**
- **Encourage local literacy groups to recruit literacy volunteers willing to work with parolees and probationers.**
- **Encourage more initiatives such as that of the State Bar of Texas designed specifically to deal with this segment of the population in need of literacy services.**

"Most people can see that the prison system sucks away enormous resources that could be better spent elsewhere, and that anything that keeps people out of prison -- like education -- is an excellent long-term investment. One does not need to be a liberal to appreciate this analysis, a pragmatist will see it just as clearly."

Harold L. Hodgkinson, *The Same Client: The Demographics of Education and Service Delivery Systems.*

Success Stories

The Corpus Christi Literacy Council, in partnership with Del Mar College and the Corpus Christi/Nueces County Private Industry Council, received a Texas Literacy Council Partnerships Grant. It's computer-assisted reading program has opened whole new worlds for its students, including Sandra Mirabal, a 51-year-old single mother of ten children.

Measurement

With the limited resources available for literacy services, it is especially important that funds are spent with maximum efficiency on effective, cost-efficient programs. **The Texas Literacy Council will work to build accurate and fair tools to measure effectiveness and build accountability, pegged to nationally acceptable standards.**

The business community is leading the way in asking schools for specific goals and program accountability, just as they would a division or subsidiary of their company. A participant at a business conference remarked that "if a product had the same failure rates as education currently does, the product would be recalled." Literacy services must be seen by the business community, public officials and the public as effective, efficient and necessary.

What gets measured, gets done. Evaluation must be built into all programs. More money and research is necessary to document what works, for whom it works, and why. Encouraging this research and disseminating the results is the role of the Texas Literacy Council.

Success Stories

Communities in Schools (CIS) works to keep students in school by providing the services they need and helping them solve their problems. Recognized by legislative and educational leadership for its success, CIS received $2 million from the Texas Legislature in 1989 to expand its operations. CIS develop partnerships among government, business and state agencies to address the critical problems facing at-risk youth; the Texas Literacy Council is approaching the problems of illiterate Texans in much the same way.

Other Pieces of the Solution

Interagency Work Group

The Texas Literacy Council's Interagency Work Group has been an invaluable source for assessing the inter-twined factors leading to illiteracy. In order for the Texas Literacy Council to act as an advocate for literacy work in the state, it must encourage solutions to the problems faced by the clients of the agencies in the Interagency Work Group. Coordination of funding and services by these agencies is the most effective way for the Texas Literacy Council to meet another of the mandates of HB 1888, to ensure the optimum use of public and private literacy resources. **The Council recommends the continuation of the Interagency Work Group.**

The Texas Literacy Council recognizes the absolute necessity of all students to be proficient in basic language arts and math skills when they complete the fifth grade and begin to make the transition to middle school and ultimately to high school. No student should leave elementary school without these basic literacy skills. If educational levels don't improve, the Council's work will never be done. Illiteracy is a multi-faceted problem, and multi-faceted solutions are needed. **The Council recommends that the Legislature approve the funding requests of other state agencies providing literacy and support services, specifically the Texas Education Agency's Adult Basic Education Division, as well as those agencies dealing with health and child care issues**. The Council's own funding request is on page 16.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 mandates are not yet firm, but indications are that both public and private programs will be required to be accessible to persons with disabilities. **The Texas Literacy Council will encourage the development of literacy tutors with sign language skills, as well as tutors for other disability accommodations.**

Public Awareness Campaign

There are many options available for increasing public awareness of the problem of illiteracy as well as for recruiting literacy service volunteers and informing adult nonreaders of available services:

- Expand the Council's current literacy hotline to include program information for literacy providers as well as referral for those seeking services;
- Encourage the establishment of local literacy hotlines where feasible;
- Encourage local literacy public awareness campaigns; and
- Investigate the possibility of establishing a "Just Dial Zero" campaign, as this telephone operator assisted program has been very successful in another state.

Interagency Work Group

Kelly Caudell
Texas Rehabilitation Commission

Cheryl Johnson
Texas Department of Corrections

Claire Johnson
State Job Training Coordinating Council

Roy Kimble
Texas Employment Commission

Ann Lopez
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Will Reece
Texas Council on Vocational Education

Anne Ramos
Texas State Library and Archives

Ellen Skinner
Texas Department of Human Services

Deborah Stedman
Texas Education Agency

The Texas Literacy Council's Commitment

The Council is dedicated to overseeing the implementation of its goals:

- **Goal 1: Establish and support a comprehensive network of family literacy programs throughout the state;**
- **Goal 2: Support and enhance workplace literacy initiatives; and**
- **Goal 3: Coordinate with the criminal justice system to attack the link between illiteracy and crime.**

The Council has in this report laid out its plan to significantly improve the literacy rate in Texas over the next five years through the following strategies:

- Build the capacity of literacy and basic skills services so that every needy Texan can be served.
- Establish local literacy councils to serve all counties with a population greater than 10,000 in order to fill the gaps identified in *A Report on the State of Adult Literacy in Texas -- 1990-91*.
- Increase family literacy programs to 20% of all literacy programs, as compared to 1% today.
- Make available advice, counsel, materials and literature on model workplace literacy initiatives to every business.
- Foster the development of programs designed to reduce illiteracy in the inmate, parolee and probationer population.
- Create a literacy trust fund to provide on-going support to non-profit literacy providers.

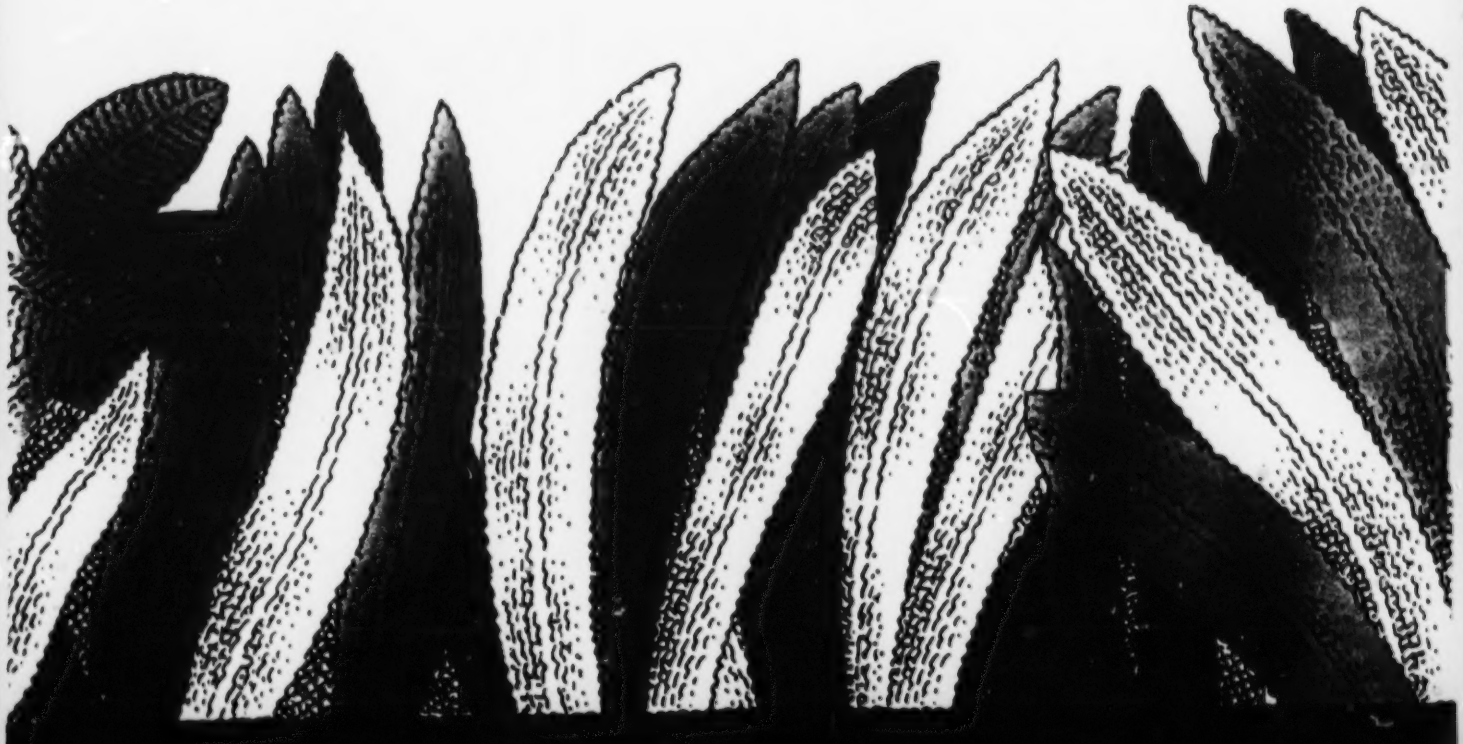
Funding Request

The Texas Literacy Council respectfully requests general appropriation funding for Fiscal Year 1992 in the amount of $2,238,281 and $2,985,281 for Fiscal Year 1993.

General revenue appropriations are necessary to meet the goals the Legislature set for the Texas Literacy Council, as well as to implement the strategies in the five-year plan. Though available JTPA funds will continue to be allocated to the Texas Literacy Council through the Texas Department of Commerce, these restrictive funds will not allow the state to carry out the mandate of HB 1888 to serve all Texans in need of literacy services.

That illiteracy is an ingredient in many of society's ills -- crime, poverty, drugs -- is indisputable. That increasing literacy decreases crime, poverty and drug use is also a proven correlation. The innovative, holistic approaches required to attack illiteracy need the flexibility of general revenue funds.

It is time to make the investment necessary to ensure a literate Texas. With future adequate, flexible funding, the Texas Literacy Council will begin to implement literacy programs to prepare Texans to fill the demands of an ever-changing, ever-more-technical workplace. Failure to fund the initiatives described will sentence more and more Texans -- 19% -- to a lifetime of unemployability, of dependency on the state's welfare and prison systems.



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